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SUBJ/PUBLIC AFFAIRS-NAVAL SERVICE MEDICAL NEWS (NSMN) (94-46)//
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RMKS/1. THIS SERVICE IS FOR GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION AND NEWS OF INTEREST TO NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEMBERS, CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES, FAMILY MEMBERS AND RETIRED BENEFICIARIES OF NAVY MEDICINE. MAXIMUM AND TIMELY REDISTRIBUTION OR FURTHER REPRODUCTION AND USE BY ACTION ADDRESSEES IS ENCOURAGED. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN COORDINATED WITH THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS (CMC). THE COMMANDANT HAS AUTHORIZED TRANSMISSION TO MARINE CORPS ACTIVITIES.

2. HEADLINES AND GENERAL INTEREST STORIES THIS WEEK:
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HEADLINE: The Pope Blesses Navy Medicine

VATICAN CITY (NSMN) -- "I give my blessing to all the men and women of U.S. Navy Medicine," said Pope John Paul II during a courtesy call by VADM Donald F. Hagen, MC, the Surgeon General of the Navy, at the Vatican on Wednesday, 21 December.

In a moving ceremony, the Pope accepted a Bureau of Medicine and Surgery plaque from Hagen and thanked the members of the medical community for assisting those in need throughout the world. "It was an honor and a thrill to meet with the Pope," said Hagen. "And it is equally an honor and thrill to convey his blessings to the fine men and women of Navy medicine, especially during this holiest of holidays."

Hagen stopped at the Vatican after a short visit with members of Fleet Hospital Five in Zagreb, Croatia. Accompanying the Surgeon General in spreading holiday cheer throughout the hospital, which serves the United Nations Protection Force in Croatia, were BUMED assistant chief for Reserve Affairs, RADM Jim Fowler, MC, and the deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for Reserve Affairs, Mr. Wade Sanders. While there, Sanders and

Fowler met with some of the 11 Naval Reservists who are among the more than two hundred medical staff, Seabees and Marine members in Zagreb.

Fleet Hospital Five took over staffing of the hospital in September from Fleet Hospital Six, which had staffed the hospital since March 1994.

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HEADLINE: Naval Reserve DC Admiral Selected for Second Star
SECDEF Washington (NSMN) -- Secretary of Defense William J. Perry announced 20 December that the President had nominated RADM (lower half) James Conley Yeargin, DC, USNR, for promotion to rear admiral.

Yeargin is deputy fleet dental officer, Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, HI.

-USN-

HEADLINE: Corpsman Awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal
NMCL Long Beach, CA (NSMN) -- On 16 November at Naval Medical Clinic Long Beach, HM2 Brian A. Starr was presented the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for heroism while in an off-duty status.

Starr was at his place of residence when he noticed a small pickup truck, traveling at a high rate of speed, lose control, overturn and crash into a large metal security fence. The passenger compartment of the vehicle was crushed and the fuel tanks ruptured, causing a major gasoline leak.

Without hesitation, Starr rushed from his apartment and was the first person on the scene. He immediately took charge and dispersed the large crowd that had gathered, removing them from the danger of an explosion. With his legs saturated in gasoline, Starr and another bystander entered the vehicle through a partial opening in the driver's side window and administered emergency life-saving treatment to the trapped driver.

Starr displayed unquestionable valor as he managed to disengage the ignition system of the now smoldering vehicle. By his courage and prompt actions in the face of great personal risk, he prevented an explosion with grave destructive potential and probable loss of life.

At the presentation, Starr said: "I joined the Navy because I wanted the Hospital Corps to chip away the rough edges of my life and make me into a medical professional. Facing adversity and the uncertainty of death made me ask myself two questions. 'Are you nuts?' and 'What in the world are you doing here?'" However, my motivation to help free the passenger was reinforced by the ghostly words of encouragement I had heard years earlier from my Corps School instructors. Every single moment of the days spent in class kept playing back in my mind. And all those things I was absolutely sure I would forget after graduation came back to me and were second nature. As I worked to try to free the passenger, I could feel and hear those words of encouragement, and I knew that every instructor I had ever had was crouched down beside me.

"When it was all over, I realized that neither the Navy nor

the Hospital Corps had chipped away any of the rough edges of my life as I had expected them to. They had not made me into what I was, but they gave me the tools with which to work. The desire to be strong, the eagerness to learn, and the willingness to preserve human life. These are characteristics that make all hospital corpsmen true medical professionals."

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HEADLINE: Navy Medical Corps Officer Delivers Moving Speech

THE WHITE HOUSE, Washington (NSMN) -- On 7 December, CAPT Eleanor "Connie" Mariano, MC, White House Physician, was promoted to her current rank by President William J. Clinton in a White House ceremony. On the occasion, coincidental with Pearl Harbor Day, she delivered the following speech:

"December 7th -- a day that will live long in my memory.

"This is a day of celebration.

"This is a day of gratitude and thanks.

"And this is a day when another American dream has come true -- this time for my family. Allow me, Mr. President, to briefly share with everyone how this achievement today culminates the American dream for the Mariano family.

"I came to the White House by way of the kitchen.

"I came from a family of Navy stewards. The first Mariano who served in the United States Navy joined in the 1920s. At that time and for many years thereafter, the only way Filipinos were able to serve in the Navy was as stewards. The Mariano men served with pride and accumulated a total of over 100 years of service among them.

"The Navy meant many things to my family. It meant freedom from poverty, for my father's family was very poor. The Navy meant the opportunity to succeed. The Navy meant hope that one day your children would get an education and perhaps boldly dream of becoming physicians or naval officers. The Navy meant all the good things America had to offer.

"In exchange, the Mariano men served with pride and with loyalty, and passed on their legacy of service to their children.

"Today, I am here only because of the special people in this room and I would like to recognize them at this time:

"First, my mother, Doctor Lourdes Jingco Mariano, who sacrificed her career as a dentist to stay home and raise her children. Thank you for inspiring me to learn about science and to care for people.

"My father, Master Chief Angel Mariano, who served 29 years in the United States Navy and achieved the highest enlisted rank of Master Chief during his career. To you I owe my ambition, drive and dedication -- and my love of the Navy.

"My sister, Lorie. Thank you for continually reminding me that I owe everything to the grace of God.

"My husband, Richard Stevens, who sacrificed his career as a trial attorney to allow me to extend my tour at the White House. Thank you, Richard, for your unending support, patience and understanding. I couldn't have done this without you.

"My sons, Andrew and Jason Stevens, who frequently wonder where their mother is. I hope that one day you will understand

why it is so important for me to be away at work at this time in our lives together. Thank you for your love and patience with me.

"To my other family -- the White House Medical Unit. You are the best of the best. Thank you for your dedication, loyalty, and for your humor. I am proud to serve as your director.

"To my brothers, the military aides to the President. Thank you for teaching me by your example how to become a better leader. You are the true professionals.

"And to Master Chiefs Bautista, Sanchez, Nelvis, and Fama -- my godfathers. Thank you for reminding me daily that I owe my presence here to people like you and my father who paved the way. Thank you for never letting me forget about the qualities of kindness, silent service, loyalty and humility.

"And finally, thank you, Mr. President, for your faith and trust in me. It is a privilege and honor to know you and to serve as your physician."

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HEADLINE: Sailor Reenlists at the Army-Navy Game

NMCL Philadelphia (NSMN) -- The 95th Army-Navy football game was the location selected by HM3 Larry D. Conway to reenlist in the U.S. Navy.

On 3 December at Veterans Stadium in Philadelphia, Conway reenlisted at halftime in front of a capacity crowd. "I wanted to do something different," he said.

Conway, an avid football fan from St. Louis, MO, is stationed at Naval Medical Clinic Philadelphia. He transfers next month to the Third Marine Division in Okinawa, Japan.

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HEADLINE: NAVADMIN Details Diplomate and Board Certified Pay

CNO Washington (NSMN) -- NAVADMIN 231/94, dtg 072103Z DEC 94, provides specific details about diplomate pay for psychologists and board certified pay for non-physician health care providers. The NAVADMIN lists eligibility requirements, annual rates of pay, recognized organizations issuing board certification, effective dates and administrative procedures.

"DOD recognizes there are other health care provider categories, i.e. nurse practitioners and nurse midwives, that are not currently entitled to board certified pay," says the message. "This situation is being addressed separately through legislative channels."

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HEADLINE: Public Misinformed on Birth Control Pill

AMA Seattle, WA (NSMN) -- The birth control pill can prevent disease and prolong life, but most American women are not aware of those positive aspects, says a researcher who blames adverse reports in the media for misleading the public on the health effects of oral contraceptives.

David Grimes, MD, professor and vice chair, Department of Obstetrics/Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, University of

California at San Francisco, spoke to the American Medical Association's 13th Annual Science Reporters Conference in Seattle last month.

Grimes says women who take the pill decrease their chances of getting ovarian cancer. He says the risk decreases the longer the pill is used and the protection lasts at least 15 years after use has ended. It's estimated that women who take the pill for a decade or longer cut by 80 percent their chance of being afflicted with the most deadly gynecologic cancer in the United States.

Grimes points to comedian Gilda Radner's death from ovarian cancer as an event that focused public attention on the disease. But Radner's story ended up promoting ovarian cancer screening, which Grimes says is very expensive and has inconclusive results. "Here we know we have a safe, effective method that a doctor can prescribe that will prevent cancer," he says of oral contraceptives. "Let's focus on prevention."

Oral contraceptives also safeguard women against endometrial cancer, the most common gynecologic cancer in the United States, Grimes says. The pill reduces the risk for endometrial cancer by as much as 50 percent, with the protection strongest in women considered at high risk, including those who have not given birth. As with ovarian cancer, the pill protects women against endometrial cancer at least 15 years after use, Grimes says.

The pill also cuts in half the risk of pelvic inflammatory disease, the most common serious infection to afflict women, with about one million American women affected each year, Grimes says. Pelvic inflammatory disease, or infection of the fallopian tubes, can cause infertility, ectopic pregnancy and chronic pelvic pain, with billions of dollars spent each year treating the disease, he says.

Oral contraceptives reduce by about 90 percent the danger of ectopic, or tubal, pregnancy, Grimes says. Ectopic pregnancy is the leading cause of maternal mortality in early pregnancy, and the numbers and rates have tripled in recent years to reach epidemic proportions in the United States, Grimes says.

Oral contraceptives increase the quality of life of women by reducing their menstrual flows and, as a result, their chances of iron deficiency anemia. Menstrual bleeding is an "important source of iron loss in women," Grimes explains. The progestin in birth control pills also substantially reduces the risk of benign breast disease, a source of "great emotional anguish," Grimes says. There is also evidence to suggest that oral contraceptives may also protect against toxic shock syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis, Grimes adds.

While the pill prevents disease and even death, those facts are "entirely contrary to the view held by most American women," Grimes says. Gallup polls conducted in 1985 and early this year show there is "gross misinformation and gross confusion about oral contraceptives," with a majority of women holding negative views of the pill, he says.

The number of news reports on the adverse effects of the pill has left women with "a lopsided perspective on pill safety." Physicians should not push women to use the pill, Grimes says,

but should educate their patients on "one of the best kept secrets in America."

For more information, contact the AMA's Science News Department at (312) 464-5374.

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HEADLINE: HEALTHWATCH: DEPO-Provera -- 'New Kid on the Block'

BMC Atsugi, Japan (NSMN) -- If you are a sexually active female and do not wish to become pregnant, you need to use a contraceptive. However, you may have found it difficult to make a choice among all the methods that are now available.

Many women have heard of an injectable contraceptive. In order for you to make a more informed choice about your method of contraception, I'd like to present you with some information about Depo-Provera for your consideration as a birth control method.

Depo-Provera (sterile medoxyprogesterone acetate suspension) has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration since 1992 for use as a contraceptive. Worldwide, it is used by more than 90 million women.

Depo-Provera is given as an injection -- a shot. Although most people don't like shots, they tolerate them without problems. However, if you have a real fear of needles, this is not the method for you. The injection is repeated every 10-12 weeks.

There are side effects to Depo-Provera, as there are with other forms of contraception. The most common side effect is irregular spotting or bleeding. Menstrual irregularities usually resolve after three to six months. Additionally, within one year, many women have no periods. Infrequently there are other side effects, which may include weight gain, headaches, bloating, dizziness, weakness or decreased sex drive.

Some women cannot take Depo-Provera: pregnant women; women with abnormal vaginal bleeding; women with histories of breast or other female organ cancers, strokes, blood clots or other vascular problems, or liver problems; or women with an allergy to Depo-Provera.

Advantages of Depo-Provera over other methods of contraception is its effectiveness. You don't have to remember to take a pill every day. It does not interfere with the spontaneity of intercourse. Many women like the lack of periods. It is also safe to use while breastfeeding.

To be eligible for Depo-Provera, you must meet certain criteria: (1) you must be free of any of the conditions previously listed, (2) you must have had a PAP smear within the year, and (3) you must have a negative urine pregnancy test.

Depo-Provera is a very popular method of birth control. As the "new kid on the block," it is getting a lot of attention. However, it may not be the contraceptive for you. Condoms, foam, the diaphragm, the IUD and the pill are just a few of the other methods of contraception that might be right for you. Also, you must remember that Depo-Provera is only a form of contraception, it does not prevent sexually transmitted diseases. To reduce the risk of STDs, you would still have to use a condom.

If you have questions about contraception, please contact your local medical treatment facility.

Story by LCDR Cheryl Rhodes, NC, Branch Medical Clinic Atsugi

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HEADLINE: Navy Medical Department People Involved in Operations BUMED Washington (NSMN) -- Wherever the Navy or Marine Corps goes, so does the Navy Medical Department. Thirty percent of our personnel are normally assigned with deployable fleet and fleet marine forces units. Additional medical support is provided for operations such as Provide Promise in Zagreb. These men and women are on duty around the globe. Here is the latest update on where are medical people are on assignment.

Medical forces currently on operational assignment are:

Operation Able Vigil

Total medical/dental personnel: 226 (includes 57 BUMED augmentees)

The Navy Medical Department is in full support of Operation Able Vigil. Three physicians, 13 nurses, one Medical Service Corps officer and 33 hospital corpsmen are deployed at the Naval Hospital and Naval Station located on Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, providing medical treatment for around 28,000 migrants, in addition to providing medical support to many afloat platforms. Also, seven EPMU (Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit) people are in Panama, one environmental health officer, one entomologist and five preventive medicine technicians.

Operation Vigilant Warrior

Total medical/dental personnel: 180 (includes four BUMED augmentees)

USS Essex (LHD 2) ARG: The Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) has 38 ward beds, five operating rooms, two intensive care beds, seven quiet room beds, 400 overflow beds and has a medical/dental staff of 117.

USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) CVBG: The Carrier Battle Group has 62 ward beds, one operating room, eight intensive care beds, 20 quiet room beds, 340 overflow beds and has a medical/dental staff of 59.

In Country: Attached with the Administrative Support Unit Bahrain are five physicians, two dentists, three nurses, five MSC officers, 29 corpsmen and four dental technicians. Of these, four are BUMED augmentees: one dentist, one nurse, one corpsman and one dental technician.

Operation Provide Promise

Total medical/dental personnel: 311 (includes 199 BUMED augmentees)

USS Nassau (LHA 4) ARG: The Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) has 48 ward beds, six operating rooms, 17 intensive care beds, seven quiet room beds, 460 overflow beds and has a medical/dental staff of 121.

CDR John Coyne, MSC, is the Force Hygiene Officer for the United Nations Protection Force located in country.

A total of 280 personnel assigned to Fleet Hospital Five, including 198 medical personnel, staff the U.N. Hospital located at Camp Pleso. Medical personnel were taken from Navy Medical

commands located throughout the Healthcare Support Office Norfolk and Jacksonville Regions.

Operation Joint Task Force Full Accounting

Navy physicians and independent duty corpsmen are supporting this operation by volunteering to serve tours ranging from just under two weeks to two months. Eleven missions remain for FY95. National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, MD, and Naval Hospital Jacksonville, FL, have IDCs in country supporting current missions. Personnel for the next scheduled missions will be coming out of Naval Medical Center San Diego and Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, CA.

Exercise Support

Individuals and components of mobile medical augmentation readiness teams (MMARTs) support various exercises/operations as required, bolstering the "organic" medical assets of the units involved.

Surgical Team Four from National Naval Medical Center Bethesda and Surgical Team Eight from Naval Hospital Jacksonville are on routine, 48-hour alert for any emergency situations. No Surgical Teams are involved with current operations at this time.

Fleet Surgical Teams are also deployed to provide additional medical support where needed, as directed by the CINCs.

Miscellaneous OCONUS and Fleet Support

Providing TAD (temporary additional duty) support to 11 fleet platforms and five OCONUS facilities are 22 Navy Medical Department personnel: Seven physicians, two MSCs, two nurses and 11 hospital corpsmen.

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3. January calendar of events, observances and anniversaries: JANUARY

March of Dimes Birth Defects Prevention Month (914/997-4622)

National Eye Care Month (Optic Foundation, 415/561-8500)

Thyroid Disease Awareness Month (212/626-6554) (see article below)

1 January: Deadline for MSC Inserv Procurement Program (PERS-251)

1 January 1970: National Environmental Policy Act, making it federal policy to protect the environment, becomes effective

8-14 January: National Patient Representation and Consumer Affairs Week -- Theme: "Up With Patients" (312/422-3999)

9 January 1945: U.S. Sixth Army lands on main Philippine island of Luzon

10 January: Morning (0600-0800) and Night (until 2200) Detailing (times are for Washington DC)

10 January: Active E8/9 Special board convenes

10 January 1920: League of Nations created

11 January 1964: U.S. Surgeon General Luther Terry issued first government report that smoking may be hazardous to health

12 January 1945: Soviets launch massive offensive against Germans in Poland

13 January 1910: Lee De Forest arranges world's first radio broadcast to public in New York City

15 January 1929: Martin Luther King Jr. born

16 January: Holiday -- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 16 January 1920: Sale of alcoholic beverages in the United States becomes illegal
 17 January: Nurse Corps Duty Under Instruction board convenes
 17 January 1955: USS Nautilus underway on nuclear power (Nautilus had been launched 21 January 1954)
 17 January 1945: Warsaw falls to Soviets
 19 January: E-7 Advancement Exam
 22 January: Sight Saving Sabbath (Prevent Blindness America, 1-800-331-2020)
 22-28 January: National Glaucoma Awareness Week (1-800-331-2020)
 23 January 1845: "First Tuesday" made election day
 23-27 January: National Back Health Week (609/392-7600)
 24 January: Morning (0600-0800) and Night (until 2200) Detailing (times are for Washington DC)
 25 January: National IV Nurse Day (617/489-5205)
 27 January 1880: Edison patented light bulb
 28 January: Sight-Saving Sabbath (1-800-331-2020)
 28 January 1915: U.S. Coast Guard established
 31 January: LT FitReps due
 31 January: E-1, E-2, E-3 Evals due
 31 January: Chinese New Year
 -more-

HEADLINE: Thyroid Disease Awareness Month

AHA Chicago, IL (NSMN) -- The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) has set aside January 1995 as Thyroid Disease Awareness Month, a special public health outreach to emphasize the need for better detection and diagnosis of conditions that are often easily treated, but undetected, until serious complications result. Thyroid disease affects between six and eight million Americans -- primarily women -- but as many as four million remain undiagnosed and untreated because of the condition's slow onset and diverse symptoms.

AACE will launch Thyroid Disease Awareness Month with a national initiative to educate people at risk for hypo- and hyperthyroidism about warning signs and the need for screening. Thyroid Disease Awareness Month will fill what has been one of the largest voids in public health -- lack of education and awareness about the thyroid, its function and the diseases affecting it.

For more information, contact Lara Gregory, Interscience Communications, Ltd., 1120 Avenue of the Americas, Fourth Floor, New York, NY 10036; (212) 626-6554.

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4. ADDRESSEES ARE ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT INFORMATION AND NEWS ITEMS OF MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OR BENEFICIARY INTEREST (IN STORY FORMAT) BY TELEPHONE, FAX OR E-MAIL TO BUMED, ATTN: EDITOR, NAVAL SERVICE MEDICAL NEWS (MED 00P2). TELEPHONE (202) 653-0793, DSN 294-0793. FAX (202) 653-0086, DSN 294-0086. E-MAIL NMC0ENL@BUMED10.MED.NAVY.MIL//

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